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Mr. Philip Isenberg, Chair
Delta Stewardship Council
VIA email

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Re: Scoping comments on the NOP for the EIR on the Delta Plan

I respectfully submit these comments in response to the Council's December 10, 2010 Notice of Preparation. I am a resident of the foothill community of Sonora and a long time student of California water policy.

1. Think "outside of the box". It can be legitimately argued that many of the problems of the Delta, and California water policy generally, has been that water managers and others have failed to think creatively and have avoided "rocking the boat". That is understandable coming from middle level managers. Your Council is, in effect, a team of senior level water managers. You must not be afraid to consider new ideas, revisit ideas previously rejected for whatever reasons, and generate your own creative ideas and proposals without regard to who might be offended.

2. Interpret your legislative mandate broadly. For example, do not assume that the charge to "provide a more reliable water supply" is equivalent to providing increased (or even current) amounts of water to all sectors which consume water. Likewise, the mandate to reduce reliance on the Delta may very well mean lower diversions from the Delta.

3. Analyze the broadest possible range of conveyance alternatives. I may be one of only a handful of people in California without a strong opinion one way or the other on a Peripheral Canal (or tunnel, or whatever it may be called). But I share the concerns of many that if one comes to pass it could be the instrumentality that is used to send to points south more of the water currently needed in the streams of Northern California and the Delta. Review the history of the canal and if it becomes a part of the Delta Plan build in ironclad safeguards for the environment and the Delta tributaries.

4. Be sensitive to areas of origin. As a foothill resident I can assure you that there is fear, bordering on paranoia, that "they" are going to try to solve the problems of the Delta, the San Joaquin Valley, San Francisco Bay, etc. by coming after "our" water. While this fear may be exaggerated it is the perception that counts. You must take it into account.

5. Base your decisions on the best possible science. And that includes ignoring those who disagree with biological opinions, SWRCB flow criteria and the like and insist on labeling them

“junk science”. Press your own science advisors to give you the best possible counsel on which of the many pieces of science available to you is the most credible.

6. Look at land retirement as a “two-fer” – two for the price of one. The excellent report by the Environmental Water Caucus (California Water Solutions Now) indicates that retirement of the worst of the toxic lands in the San Joaquin Valley would effectively free up enough water to more than meet the additional water needed through the Delta as concluded by the SWRCB. The second benefit to retiring those lands is that it would end one source of pollutants currently finding their way down the San Joaquin River and into the Delta.

7. Carefully consider the detailed recommendations of the numerous Environmental, Environmental Justice, and Fishing Community organizations submitted to you in Stockton on January 25. Maybe never before have so many knowledgeable and experienced water policy experts reached such unanimity on a matter long so contentious and complicated. Their recommendations should be given great weight.

Very truly yours,

s/Jerry Cadagan
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